
FW: 'This is so preventable': Richmond-area students prepare to walk out of class after school shootings

1 message

Geller, Corinne <Corinne.Geller@vsp.virginia.gov>
To: "Potter, Dena (DGS)" <Dena.Potter@dgs.virginia.gov>

Sun, Mar 11, 2018 at 11:17 PM

'This is so preventable': Richmond-area students prepare to walk out of class after school shootings

- By JUSTIN MATTINGLY Richmond Times-Dispatch
- 1 hr ago

Sam Alburger sat in his Hermitage High School Spanish class a month ago as a push notification popped up on his cellphone. An active shooter was reported at a Florida high school.

The junior was shocked, he said, that it was happening yet again. It was at least the sixth school shooting in less than two months. Authorities would announce later on Valentine's Day that 17 people — including 14 of his high school-aged peers — had died.

"Something needs to be done," Alburger said. "There are too many of these things happening with just too much regularity."

Alburger will be one of many students across the Richmond region walking out of their classes at 10 a.m. Wednesday as part of a nationwide demonstration against gun violence.

They'll protest for 17 minutes — one minute for each Parkland death — before returning to their classrooms, the start of a string of protests planned over the coming weeks.

Since the Columbine High School shooting in 1999 that stunned the nation, four or more people have been killed in 10 school shootings, with the most deadly being the Virginia Tech massacre in 2007.

"This is so preventable," Alburger said. "If only we had taken action when Las Vegas happened, when Orlando happened, when Columbine happened, when Virginia Tech happened, when Sandy Hook happened, when any of those shootings happened. It's preventable."

Alburger, the head organizer of the walkout at Hermitage in Henrico County, wants the school's protest to be about more than just school shootings, but gun violence as a whole. He said as part of the walkout, organizers hope to register the school's 18-year-olds to vote and to write letters to legislators.

"The only way to really make concrete change is to vote," Alburger said. "Walkouts are great, but if we don't have a call to action that happens immediately, then no change is ever going to occur."

The Virginia House of Delegates has created a special committee to study school safety, the first select committee in more than 150 years. The committee will not focus on guns.

The General Assembly killed several gun control bills this session, including proposals to require universal background checks on gun purchases and a ban on bump stocks, which were used in the Las Vegas shooting last year.

Maxwell Nardi, a senior at Douglas S. Freeman High School, said he's "sick of inaction" by legislators.

"When adults start playing jeopardy with our lives, that's where we start saying it's not OK, we're sick of it," he said. "It's just not OK to have students being shot and killed."

Nardi, like his fellow Henrico organizer, said the issue extends beyond school shootings.

"Schools are definitely the origin of this movement, but looking beyond that, it's not like gun violence is a new problem, but we're hoping to make it a fixed problem," he said.

Nardi helped organize another walkout, scheduled from 1 to 4:30 p.m. April 20. According to current plans for the walkout, students will protest in front of their schools at the beginning of the day and convene at 1 p.m. at the Virginia Capitol. Event organizers are expecting about 10,000 people, according to the rally's permit application.

A third form of activism has been scheduled for Saturday, March 24, with Richmond Public Schools organizing a rally starting at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School at 10 a.m. before a rally at the Bell Tower at the Capitol.

RPS announced the rally in a March 1 statement that also included the division's stance on this week's walkouts relating to student discipline.

"While we wholeheartedly respect every individual's right to peaceful assembly and free expression, our top priority is to provide a safe teaching and learning environment for all, so having large numbers of students walking off campus would pose a significant safety risk for students," the division said in a statement.

RPS has instructed principals to help "find creative ways to facilitate student-led activities on school grounds," a spokesperson said, adding that the "intent is not to penalize students, but to ensure their safety and uphold the true purpose of the events."

In a notification to families, Henrico school officials straddled the line of endorsing the walkouts and threatening disciplinary action.

"While we do not encourage walking out of class, students do not forfeit their First Amendment rights when they enter school," Superintendent Patrick Kinlaw and School Board Chairwoman Micky Ogburn said. "Such a walkout may present significant safety and classroom instruction concerns, but it also presents opportunities for learning and growth."

Chesterfield County Public Schools said it will set up supervised locations for students to either hold a memorial service in honor of the Florida victims or an assembly about the importance of school safety.

In a letter to families, the division said it won't discipline students who walk out to the designated safe spaces but those students will receive an unexcused absence from class.

Hanover County Public Schools Superintendent Michael Gill encouraged students to not disrupt instructional time and to instead talk to school officials if they'd like to organize demonstrations during noninstructional time.

In a letter to families, Gill said students aren't allowed outside of school unsupervised, but said that if there are unapproved student protests that "our immediate focus will be to ensure the safety of all students."

His letter did not say whether students would be disciplined if they walk out.

Regardless of the possibility of being disciplined, students said they're ready to walk out in opposition to gun violence.

"Kids are being murdered in schools and nothing's being done about it," Nardi said. "We need to change that."

Corinne N. Geller

Public Relations Director

Virginia State Police

(Office) 804-674-2789

(Cell) 804-263-5547

Web: www.vsp.virginia.gov



The information in this email and any attachments may be confidential and privileged. Access to this email by anyone other than the intended addressee is unauthorized. If you are not the intended recipient (or the employee or agent responsible for delivering this information to the intended recipient) please notify the sender by reply email and immediately delete this email and any copies from your computer and/or storage system. The sender does not authorize the use, distribution, disclosure or reproduction of this email (or any part of its contents) by anyone other than the intended recipient(s). No representation is made that this email and any attachments are free of viruses. Virus scanning is recommended and is the responsibility of the recipient.

Invitation: Reminder: April 20th Protest Planning Meeting @ Thu Mar 29, 2018 2pm - 3pm (EDT)
(dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov)

1 message

Ray Goodloe <rgoodloe@dcp.virginia.gov>

Tue, Mar 27, 2018 at 10:06 AM

Reply-To: Ray Goodloe <rgoodloe@dcp.virginia.gov>

To: dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov, Karen Anderson <kanderson@dcp.virginia.gov>, travis.perdue@vsp.virginia.gov, Steven Pike <steve.pike@dcp.virginia.gov>, keshawn.manns@richmondgov.com, Mark Sykes <msykes@dcp.virginia.gov>, sandra.gill@dgs.virginia.gov, Steve Robinson <srobinson@dcp.virginia.gov>, Randy Howard <rhoward@dcp.virginia.gov>, jwhelmlinger@vcu.edu, Christopher D Preuss <cdpreuss@vcu.edu>, william.lawson@richmondgov.com, rick.fields@vsp.virginia.gov, wedrana.black@vsp.virginia.gov, jlayne@dcp.virginia.gov, kristy.martin@dgs.virginia.gov, douglas.clevert.jr@richmondgov.com, john.o'kleasky@richmondgov.com, vruffin@raaems.org

Reminder: April 20th Protest Planning Meeting[more details »](#)

Update for the April 20th School Walkout Event

When Thu Mar 29, 2018 2pm – 3pm Eastern Time

Where DCP Training Room, 2nd Floor Washington Bldg, 1100 Bank St, Rich Va ([map](#))Video call https://hangouts.google.com/hangouts/_/dlas.virginia.gov/reminder-aprilCalendar [dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov](#)

Who

- Ray Goodloe - organizer
- Karen Anderson
- travis.perdue@vsp.virginia.gov
- Steven Pike
- keshawn.manns@richmondgov.com
- Mark Sykes
- sandra.gill@dgs.virginia.gov
- Steve Robinson
- Randy Howard
- jwhelmlinger@vcu.edu
- dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov
- Christopher D Preuss
- william.lawson@richmondgov.com
- rick.fields@vsp.virginia.gov
- wedrana.black@vsp.virginia.gov
- jlayne@dcp.virginia.gov
- kristy.martin@dgs.virginia.gov
- douglas.clevert.jr@richmondgov.com
- john.o'kleasky@richmondgov.com
- vruffin@raaems.org

Going? **Yes** - **Maybe** - **No** [more options »](#)Invitation from [Google Calendar](#)You are receiving this email at the account dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov because you are subscribed for invitations on calendar dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov.To stop receiving these emails, please log in to <https://www.google.com/calendar/> and change your notification settings for this calendar.Forwarding this invitation could allow any recipient to modify your RSVP response. [Learn More](#). **invite.ics**
5K

Re: Rallies, marches & protests - RVA - Aug/Sept

1 message

Geller, Corinne <corinne.geller@vsp.virginia.gov>

Tue, Jul 31, 2018 at 3:16 PM

To: Corey Byers <byersc@vcu.edu>

Cc: "Lepley, Gene - Police, Public Affairs" <Gene.Lepley@richmondgov.com>, "Rarrick, Chelsea K. - Police" <Chelsea.Rarrick@richmondgov.com>, James Mercante <James.Mercante@richmondgov.com>, "Rowland, Susan R. - VSP" <Susan.Rowland@vsp.virginia.gov>, "Potter, Dena (DGS)" <dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov>, Joseph Macenka <jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov>, "Hill, Keeli L., Sgt." <Keeli.Hill@vsp.virginia.gov>

Thanks, Corey! C

Corinne N. Geller
Public Relations Director
Virginia State Police
(O) 804-674-2789
(C) 804-263-5547

The information in this email and any attachments may be confidential and privileged. Access to this email by anyone other than the intended addressee is unauthorized. If you are not the intended recipient (or the employee or agent responsible for delivering this information to the intended recipient) please notify the sender by reply email and immediately delete this email and any copies from your computer and/or storage system. The sender does not authorize the use, distribution, disclosure or reproduction of this email (or any part of its contents) by anyone other than the intended recipient(s). No representation is made that this email and any attachments are free of viruses. Virus scanning is recommended and is the responsibility of the recipient.

On Tue, Jul 31, 2018 at 1:35 PM, Corey Byers <byersc@vcu.edu> wrote:

FYI from VCU Public Affairs / Police on events in downtown Richmond for the months ahead. Sharing in case coordinated comms/coverage is needed:

- "Protect the Jefferson Davis Monument" is Sunday, August 19 from noon to 4 p.m. (It's move-in weekend but will be a little further from campus.) Currently 11 going and 127 interested. (CSA II) (Coincides with move-in weekend for new students at VCU)
- Marcus Peters protest march scheduled for Sat Sept 8, 2018 12 PM starting at VCU's Siegel Center
- "Protect all the Monuments on Monument Avenue", Saturday, September 15 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) Currently 12 going and 171 interested. That one appears to be taking place at the Lee Monument. (CSA II). (Coincides with the NRA convention being held at Convention Center)

-CB

Corey Byers, M.S. | Public Information Officer
VCU Public Affairs // VCU Police Department**E-mail:** byersc@vcu.edu**(O)** (804) 828-3907 **(C)** (804) 263-4977*After-hours media line: (804) 418-0174*[VCU News](#) // [Web](#) // [Facebook](#) // [Twitter](#) // [Instagram](#)

Re: Rallies, marches & protests - RVA - Aug/Sept

1 message

Keeli Hill <keeli.hill@vsp.virginia.gov>

Tue, Jul 31, 2018 at 3:56 PM

To: Corey Byers <byersc@vcu.edu>

Cc: "Geller, Corinne" <corinne.geller@vsp.virginia.gov>, James Mercante <James.Mercante@richmondgov.com>, Joseph Macenka <jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov>, "Lepley, Gene - Police, Public Affairs" <Gene.Lepley@richmondgov.com>, "Potter, Dena (DGS)" <dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov>, "Rarrick, Chelsea K. - Police" <Chelsea.Rarrick@richmondgov.com>, "Rowland, Susan R. - VSP" <Susan.Rowland@vsp.virginia.gov>

Thanks Corey!

On Tue, Jul 31, 2018 at 13:35 Corey Byers <byersc@vcu.edu> wrote:

FYI from VCU Public Affairs / Police on events in downtown Richmond for the months ahead. Sharing in case coordinated comms/coverage is needed:

- "Protect the Jefferson Davis Monument" is Sunday, August 19 from noon to 4 p.m. (It's move-in weekend but will be a little further from campus.) Currently 11 going and 127 interested. (CSA II) (Coincides with move-in weekend for new students at VCU)
- Marcus Peters protest march scheduled for Sat Sept 8, 2018 12 PM starting at VCU's Siegel Center
- "Protect all the Monuments on Monument Avenue", Saturday, September 15 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) Currently 12 going and 171 interested. That one appears to be taking place at the Lee Monument. (CSA II). (Coincides with the NRA convention being held at Convention Center)

-CB

Corey Byers, M.S. | Public Information Officer

VCU Public Affairs // VCU Police Department

E-mail: byersc@vcu.edu**(O)** (804) 828-3907 **(C)** (804) 263-4977*After-hours media line: (804) 418-0174*[VCU News](#) // [Web](#) // [Facebook](#) // [Twitter](#) // [Instagram](#)

Sergeant Keeli L. Hill
Virginia State Police
Public Information Officer
Division One
Cell# (804)840-0525

RE: Rallies, marches & protests - RVA - Aug/Sept

1 message

Lepley, Gene - Police, Public Affairs <Gene.Lepley@richmondgov.com>

Tue, Jul 31, 2018 at 4:01 PM

To: Corey Byers <byersc@vcu.edu>, "Rarrick, Chelsea K. - Police" <Chelsea.Rarrick@richmondgov.com>, "Mercante, James R. - Police" <James.Mercante@richmondgov.com>, "Geller, Corinne" <corinne.geller@vsp.virginia.gov>, "Rowland, Susan R. - VSP" <Susan.Rowland@vsp.virginia.gov>, "Potter, Dena (DGS)" <dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov>, Joseph Macenka <jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov>, "Hill, Keeli L., Sgt." <Keeli.Hill@vsp.virginia.gov>

Thank you.



Gene Lepley
Public Affairs Director
Richmond Police Department
200 W. Grace St., Richmond VA 23220
(O) 804 646-0607
(M) 804 385-0330

From: Corey Byers [mailto:byersc@vcu.edu]**Sent:** Tuesday, July 31, 2018 1:35 PM**To:** Lepley, Gene - Police, Public Affairs; Rarrick, Chelsea K. - Police; Mercante, James R. - Police; Geller, Corinne; Rowland, Susan R. - VSP; Potter, Dena (DGS); Joseph Macenka; Hill, Keeli L., Sgt.**Subject:** Rallies, marches & protests - RVA - Aug/Sept

FYI from VCU Public Affairs / Police on events in downtown Richmond for the months ahead. Sharing in case coordinated comms/coverage is needed:

- "Protect the Jefferson Davis Monument" is Sunday, August 19 from noon to 4 p.m. (It's move-in weekend but will be a little further from campus.) Currently 11 going and 127 interested. (CSA II) (Coincides with move-in weekend for new students at VCU)
- Marcus Peters protest march scheduled for Sat Sept 8, 2018 12 PM starting at VCU's Siegel Center
- "Protect all the Monuments on Monument Avenue", Saturday, September 15 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) Currently 12 going and 171 interested. That one appears to be taking place at the Lee Monument. (CSA II). (Coincides with the NRA convention being held at Convention Center)

-CB

Corey Byers, M.S. | Public Information Officer

VCU Public Affairs // VCU Police Department

E-mail: byersc@vcu.edu**(O)** (804) 828-3907 **(C)** (804) 263-4977*After-hours media line: (804) 418-0174*[VCU News](#) // [Web](#) // [Facebook](#) // [Twitter](#) // [Instagram](#)

Lee Monument vandalism reward release

1 message

Joseph Macenka <jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov>

Tue, Aug 7, 2018 at 2:52 PM

To: Ofirah.Yheskel@governor.virginia.gov, "Trey Yeatts, WRVA" <treyyeatts@1140wrva.com>, Erin Schrad <erin@vachiefs.org>, BonAtwood@capitol-square.com, vsavsi@virginiasheriffs.org, news@timesdispatch.com, news@wric.com, news@richmond-freepress.com, newsroom@nbc12.com, aprichmond@ap.org, David Bailey <DBailey@capitol-square.com>, info@styleweekly.com, newstips@wtvr.com, Henrico Citizen <citizen@henricocitizen.com>, pwhelan@timesdispatch.com, Gene Lepley <gene.lepley@richmondgov.com>, "Mercante, James R. - Police" <james.mercante@richmondgov.com>, "Wilson, Koury N. - Police" <koury.wilson@richmondgov.com>, Joe Damico <Joe.Damico@dgs.virginia.gov>, "Potter, Dena (DGS)" <Dena.Potter@dgs.virginia.gov>, Taylor.Melton@governor.virginia.gov, Corinne Geller <corinne.geller@vsp.virginia.gov>, steve.vick@vsp.virginia.gov, "Rockett, Alison" <ARockett@timesdispatch.com>, "Martz, Michael H." <mmartz@timesdispatch.com>, "Bowes, Mark E." <mbowes@timesdispatch.com>, gmoomaw@timesdispatch.com, "Brown, Bob A." <bbrown@timesdispatch.com>, "Burns, Jacob" <jburns@wtvr.com>, anorlian@nbc12.com, "Rarrick, Chelsea K. - Police" <Chelsea.Rarrick@richmondgov.com>, jeffkatzshow@aol.com, mauryand19th@yahoo.com, amccloskey@wric.com, info@virginiamercury.com, rzullo@virginiamercury.com, fwilliams@timesdispatch.com

All,

Please see the attached, and let me know if you need anything else.


Respectfully,

JM

--

Joe Macenka

Public Information Officer
Division of Capitol Police
Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1138
Richmond, VA 23219-3418
(804) 786-2522 office
(804) 382-7447 cell
jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov
Visit our website at www.dcp.virginia.gov

 **8-7-18 Lee Monument release.pdf**
110K



Division of Capitol Police News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 7, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joe Macenka, Public Information Officer

Division of Capitol Police

Office: 804-786-2522

Cell: 804-382-7447

Email: jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov

Dena Potter, Director of Communications

Department of General Services

Office: 804-786-0282

Cell: 804-356-5508

Email: dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov

Reward offered in Lee Monument vandalism

RICHMOND – The Division of Capitol Police announced Tuesday a \$1,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the individual or individuals responsible for vandalizing the Robert E. Lee Monument last weekend.

Virginia Capitol Police believe a pressurized spraying device was used to spread a red paint-like substance on the west and southwest sides of the monument's pedestal. The vandalism occurred during the overnight hours of Friday night and Saturday morning. The Department of General Services (DGS) owns and maintains the property at Monument and Allen avenues, and Capitol Police is responsible for protecting it.

DGS hired a cleaner to remove the substance on Saturday. The cost to DGS to remove the substance was more than \$4,400. DGS is offering the reward.

"Vandalism of this magnitude on any state property comes at a cost to the taxpayer, and our hope is that this reward leads to the prosecution of those responsible so that cost can be recouped," said Joe Damico, Director of the Department of General Services.

Capitol Police are continuing their investigation of the vandalism. Anyone with information is encouraged to

call the Capitol Police dispatch center at (804) 786-2568 and ask to speak with the investigator on duty.

“While we respect the rights of people to speak freely, this was a case of vandalism, plain and simple,” said Col. Anthony S. Pike, the Capitol Police chief. “It crossed a line into criminal activity, and it will not be tolerated.”

##

Charlottesville Isn't Playing The Media's 'Both Sides' Game Anymore - Huffington Post

1 message

Geller, Corinne <corinne.geller@vsp.virginia.gov>
Bcc: dena.potter@dgs.virginia.gov

Tue, Aug 7, 2018 at 8:49 PM

A fascinating read...

Charlottesville Isn't Playing The Media's Both Sides' Game Anymore

Activists won't talk to reporters without a promise: No platform for white supremacists. Ever.

By Andy Campbell

08/07/2018 11:43 am ET **Updated** 23 minutes ago

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — The Associated Press reporter on the phone with Jalane Schmidt wanted two voices for her article: One would be Jason Kessler, the white supremacist who organized the Unite the Right rally here last year that left one dead and dozens injured. The other, the reporter hoped, would be Schmidt herself, a Black Lives Matter activist and associate professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia.

The story would be a debate, of sorts. Both sides would be represented.

"Hell no," Schmidt said after she hung up.

Schmidt gets a lot of calls from reporters. She can take you on a tour of Charlottesville with words alone. She'll tell the story of the slaves who worked on campus as students hustled to class through Nameless Field and the Rotunda, and juxtapose the image with that of torch-wielding white nationalists and Nazis who marched there on Aug. 11 last year. She's an expert on the white supremacy that has pervaded this city since its founding. It's only natural journalists would come to her.

Except a lot of journalists, locked into a mode of neutral reporting unsuited to stories about racism, also want "the other side." That's why, if you're reporting in Charlottesville, there's a question you'll have to answer if you want to interview certain activists, people of color, clergy members, educators and others affected by last year's Unite the Right rally:

Will you also be interviewing a white supremacist for your article?

If the answer is anything but no, you're probably not getting your interview. A network of more than 40 activists like Schmidt — many of whom marched, provided respite, were injured or were otherwise affected during the violent white supremacist rallies on Aug. 11 and Aug. 12 — now take calls only if they have the green light from Charlottesville

Anti-Racist Media Liaisons, a team of volunteers with a steadfast message for journalists seeking comment:

“No platform for white supremacy,” the group’s Mimi Arbeit told HuffPost. “No face time, no interviews, no way. No platform to spread their violent views and actions.”

This isn’t some petty rule aimed at making reporters’ jobs more difficult. Giving column inches to violent racists and white supremacists — like Kessler, or fellow UVa graduate and white supremacist Richard Spencer, or their pals — alongside local activists is creating an equivalency where none exists, tantamount to President Donald Trump saying there were good people “on both sides” of the Charlottesville confrontations.

Journalists are trained to seek out the two poles of any given question, as if truth could be found somewhere between them. This approach can have its virtues, but what happens when the question is about whether a class of people is fully human? Charlottesville Anti-Racist Media Liaisons members have no patience for any outlet that considers this a matter for debate.

“It’s a deep betrayal to the entire community of Charlottesville,” Arbeit said. “Fascism uses the press to normalize itself and recruit followers and gain social power. The press is not a neutral player in history.”

In Schmidt’s telling, the Unite the Right rally wasn’t exceptional; it was Charlottesville white supremacy, same as it ever was. Not long before the city’s Stonewall Jackson statue was unveiled in 1921, for instance, there was a Klan ceremony at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello. “Hundreds of Charlottesville’s leading business and professional men” attended, per Schmidt’s research, and a cross-burning ceremony was held at Jefferson’s tomb.

While the expressions of white power became more genteel over the course of the 20th century, the underlying dynamic remained. That’s what made Emancipation Park and UVa’s campus so appealing to Nazis in the first place; it’s why the Ku Klux Klan felt comfortable marching in town a month prior, and why Spencer felt safe coming back two months later; it’s why locals are still fighting over monuments to slavery and the Confederacy that tower over courthouses, in parks, and on campus.

Very often the best ally to a white supremacist is a reporter stuck in neutral. In November, The New York Times dedicated 2,000 empathic words to [“the Nazi sympathizer next door,”](#) giving him space in the newspaper of record to deny the Holocaust, demonize Trayvon Martin and “hail victory” in Charlottesville, all in one story.

In their surface neutrality, these kinds of articles assume a liberal cosmopolitanism in readers that the very existence of the articles seemingly contradicts. If Americans could be counted on to recoil from baldly stated white supremacy, well, we wouldn’t be here, would be?

This is where Charlottesville Anti-Racist Media Liaisons comes in. Formed in May 2017 in the aftermath of two tiki-torch rally in Charlottesville that were precursors to the Unite the Right event, the group is made up of volunteer flacks and activists from various anti-

racist organizations in town. They coordinate interviews between reporters and activists, issue press releases that identify different extremist groups and leaders so that local and national media know whom they're covering, and publicize anti-fascist action, when necessary. They also act as a go-between for activists who don't want to be identified by the press, but want to get a message out.

In recent months, various activists and representatives of the group have fielded calls from reporters who wanted to interview their people alongside Kessler or other extremists tied to the Unite the Right rally. Last year, they got similar requests after the KKK marched in town. The answer each time is no. Sometimes, they'll point to an Associated Press style guide on white nationalism and the alt-right, which suggests giving context when calling someone a white nationalist. Then they'll issue a press release with such context. A release from last year by Showing Up for Racial Justice, an adjacent activist group in Charlottesville, reads:

Following the spirit of the AP style suggestions, Kessler's full background should be explained in any reports: He is a white nationalist. To do otherwise is to normalize his fringe racism.

The activists of Charlottesville Anti-Racist Media Liaisons have seen up close how bad actors take advantage of the "both sides" tendencies of the media.

A few months prior to Unite the Right, Kessler was looking to get a local black politician fired. He surfaced some years-old tweets sent out by then-Vice Mayor Wes Bellamy. In one, from 2011, Bellamy reportedly retweeted a message about rape: "Word...RT: TAXSTONE: Eat it while she asleep if she moan it aint rape," the retweet read, according to the Cavalier Daily. In another: "I'm all for equal opportunity..but a Female Principal with a school full of female teachers is fkn a sure fire way to fk our lil boys up smh."

Some of the tweets were certainly bad; others — "I DONT LIK WHIT PEOPLE SO I HATE WHITE SNOW!!!! FML!!!!" he reportedly tweeted in 2009 — were harmless. But they were all being offered up in fake outrage by a man whose agenda does not include standing up for the oppressed. And any story that allowed Kessler to cast himself as a concerned citizen was only helping his cause.

Kessler seized the opportunity and began a media tour to try and get Bellamy ousted from his seat on city council. He found his mark in local freelancer Jackson Landers, who gave the white supremacist 1,000 words in C-VILLE Weekly to attack Bellamy's character. Prior to writing the story, Landers emailed local activist and lawyer Pam Starsia, wondering why she and her group, Showing Up for Racial Justice Charlottesville, were so up in arms about Kessler, rather than the vice mayor.

"I understand and agree with everything that you are saying about Kessler but what I'm having trouble understanding is the strong support of Bellamy," Landers wrote in one email, provided to HuffPost by Starsia. "What is the rationale for condemning one of these guys for his racist and sexist statements but excusing the other for his racist and sexist statements?"

The point — that this was a bad-faith campaign launched in an attempt to unseat a black politician, not to mention that anti-white racism isn't a thing — had flown over Landers' head.

"He was playing right into Kessler's thing," Starsia said this week. "Kessler wanted to attack a black man. I can't stress enough how hard Charlottesville fell for it. The media at the time was saying Wes' tweets were racist against white people."

And, most egregious of all, the media let Kessler do all the talking. In Landers' story, Kessler was dubbed a "conservative activist" who wants, among other things, to preserve Confederate monuments in town because of their "ethnic significance to Southern white people." Landers even let Kessler define white supremacy in the piece:

Among Kessler's complaints against Bellamy for "misuse of office" is his vote to remove the statue of Robert E. Lee from Lee Park.

"He made clear that he did it to attack 'white supremacy,' a partisan left-wing term that most on the right construe as a pretense to attack white people and their history," Kessler said.

Kessler's petition to remove Bellamy from office was later thrown out.

Last week, Landers defended his story in an email to HuffPost, calling it an "accurate piece of journalism." He said Kessler "hadn't shown an open affinity for Nazis or the KKK," though he admitted that he wouldn't allow Kessler to define white supremacy today.

"I think I may have been the first person to write any sort of article about Jason Kessler's antics," Landers said. But he wanted to make clear: "It is a fact that Wes Bellamy tweeted those statements and as a sitting politician that becomes news."

These are the types of stories that piss off local activists the most — the stories that soften or euphemize Kessler's intentions. The ones that make him the protagonist. "Kessler Harassed On Downtown Mall by SURJ," reads a headline. "Confederate statue supporter Jason Kessler," someone writes. "Local blogger Jason Kessler," says another.

"The feeling of being in close proximity to Nazis and in confrontation with Nazis is a weekly experience in Charlottesville," Arbeit said. "People still living in Charlottesville have not stepped away from that visceral trauma, and we have to relive it regularly. We have a lot of court dates for Nazis being tried for violent crimes, we have lawsuits against them, we have lawsuits over the [Confederate monuments], the targeting of black men who defended themselves on Aug. 12, and constant threats."

That looming threat is that Arbeit and other activists draw a hard line when it comes to showing "civility" to hateful people.

"We're not debating. We're fighting against a genocidal agenda," she said, noting that Charlottesville Anti-Racist Media Liaisons keeps tabs on news reports that give white

supremacy a platform. “The people have not forgotten or forgiven.”

|

Capitol Police news release

1 message

Joseph Macenka <jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov>

Sat, Feb 23, 2019 at 3:59 PM

To: Ofirah.Yheskel@governor.virginia.gov, "Trey Yeatts, WRVA" <treyyeatts@1140wrva.com>, Erin Schrad <erin@vachiefs.org>, BonAtwood@capitol-square.com, vsavsi@virginiasheriffs.org, news@timesdispatch.com, news@wric.com, news@richmond-freepress.com, newsroom@nbc12.com, aprichmond@ap.org, David Bailey <DBailey@capitol-square.com>, info@styleweekly.com, newstips@wtvr.com, Henrico Citizen <citizen@henricocitizen.com>, pwhelan@timesdispatch.com, Gene Lepley <gene.lepley@richmondgov.com>, "Mercante, James R. - Police" <james.mercante@richmondgov.com>, Joe Damico <Joe.Damico@dgs.virginia.gov>, "Potter, Dena (DGS)" <Dena.Potter@dgs.virginia.gov>, Taylor.Melton@governor.virginia.gov, Corinne Geller <corinne.geller@vsp.virginia.gov>, steve.vick@vsp.virginia.gov, "Rockett, Alison" <ARockett@timesdispatch.com>, "Martz, Michael H." <mmartz@timesdispatch.com>, "Bowes, Mark E." <mbowes@timesdispatch.com>, "Moomaw, Graham" <gmoomaw@timesdispatch.com>, "Brown, Bob A." <bbrown@timesdispatch.com>, "Burns, Jacob" <jburns@wtvr.com>, "Chelsea Rarrick, RPD" <Chelsea.Rarrick@richmondgov.com>, jeffkatzshow@aol.com, mauryand19th@yahoo.com, info@virginiamercury.com, Robert Zullo <rzullo@virginiamercury.com>, Sara McCloskey <SMcCloskey@wric.com>, rwilliams@timesdispatch.com, "Helber, Steve" <shelber@ap.org>, "Suderman, Alan" <asuderman@ap.org>, "Suarez, Christopher M." <csuarez@timesdispatch.com>, "Watson, Lindsey" <lindsey.watson@governor.virginia.gov>, "de Graaf, Brandon (DGS)" <Brandon.deGraaf@dgs.virginia.gov>, news@wdbj7.com, "Wilson, Patrick" <pwilson@timesdispatch.com>, "Vu, Amy Q. - Police" <Amy.Vu@richmondgov.com>

All,

Please see the attached, and as always, let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

JM

--

Joe Macenka

Public Information Officer
Division of Capitol Police
Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1138
Richmond, VA 23219-3418
(804) 786-2522 office
(804) 382-7447 cell
jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov
Visit our website at www.dcp.virginia.gov

 **2-23-19 Vandalism release.pdf**
115K



Division of Capitol Police News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 23, 2019

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joe Macenka, Public Information Officer

Division of Capitol Police

Office: 804-786-2522

Cell: 804-382-7447

Email: jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov

Capitol Police seek person in Lee Monument vandalism

RICHMOND – The Virginia Division of Capitol Police is asking for the public's help in identifying a person of interest in connection with an act of vandalism at the Robert E. Lee Monument.

Capitol Police officers are distributing the two photographs below of a person who was seen at the pedestal and on several sides of the monument at about 3 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 16. The person used what is believed to be a black laundry pen to deface the east, south and west sides of the monument, which is located at Monument and North Allen avenues in Richmond's Fan District.

Anyone with information about the person can call the Capitol Police Communications Center at (804) 786-2120 and ask to speak with the investigator on duty.



###